



A NOTE FROM THE DESK OF
DEBORAH PRYCE
 CHAIRWOMAN, HOUSE REPUBLICAN CONFERENCE



Celebrate

Women's History Month



A NOTE FROM THE

THE CHAIRWOMAN

On January 30, 2005, the world watched as more than 8 million Iraqi people went to the polls in historic national elections. The ink covered fingers signified more than the fact they voted, it represented their commitment to freedom and their dedication to democracy.

Based on the final tallies, a 275-member Transitional National Assembly (TNA) will be elected to serve as Iraq's national legislature for a transition period, and it is expected that women will occupy 31 percent of the seats. The TNA will be charged with the responsibility of drafting a new constitution, one that will reflect the ideals and desires of ALL Iraqis, not one evil tyrant.

As we begin Women's History Month this March we celebrate the women who have come before us to help shape history and salute the ones across the globe whose courage, determination and resilience is making history today.

Deborah

IN HER OWN WORDS....



"All of us were impressed by the high voter turnout in Iraq. Each ink-stained finger belonged to a man or a woman who defied suicide bombers, mortar attacks and threats of beheading to exercise a basic right as a citizen."

-- Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice
 February 8, 2005



Good Evening, Madame President

More than six in ten respondents to a new Siena Research Institute poll think the United States is ready for a woman to be president.

"The results are fascinating and very encouraging for all Americans who want the nation's highest office held by the best people - regardless of their gender," said Dr. Lonnstrum of SRI.

Congressional Women's Caucus

In Good Hands Under New Leadership

Last month Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) and Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (D-NY) passed the leadership gavels of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues and noted the caucus is in good hands with Congresswomen Ginny Brown-Waite (R-FL), the new Caucus Chairman and Hilda Solis (D-CA) as the new Vice-Chairman.

"The state of the Women's Caucus is strong," noted Capito, the outgoing Co-chair of the Women's Caucus. "Our efforts have been the driving force behind implementing a thorough sexual assault policy in the military and we raised the level of debate regarding violence against women. I am proud of the job we did and am eager to help the Caucus continue our advocacy efforts on behalf of women. I would like to see continued efforts to encourage women to enter public service there is no doubt our perspective is badly needed."

During remarks at a gavel passing ceremony and reception in the Rayburn House Office Building sponsored by Discovery Communications and Oxygen Media, Capito pointed to the powerful role women are playing in the world.

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PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT, REP. GRACE FLORES NAPOLITANO (D-CA), REP. CAPITO, REP. BROWN-WAITE (R-FL) AND REP. PRYCE (R-OH) CELEBRATE THE PASSING OF THE GAVEL OF THE CONGRESSIONAL CAUCUS ON WOMEN'S ISSUES DURING A JANUARY 2005 RECEPTION IN THE RAYBURN CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE BUILDING.

"Women continue to lead the way towards freedom around the world," noted Capito. "Even under death threats, women candidates in Iraq like former Iraqi Security Council member Songul Chapouk campaigned for office because of their belief in democracy. During recent elections in Afghanistan women emerged from the suppression of the Taliban to cast a ballot in free elections."

Capito thanked her fellow co-chair Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY) for her dedicated service, and Discovery Communications President and CEO Judith McHale and Oxygen Media founder and CEO Geraldine Laybourne for their support and sponsorship of the event.

Right to Vote Closer For Women in Kuwait

There's a chance women in Iraq won't be the only ones this year who have their first taste of democracy. If all goes well, Kuwait this month will put into law a bill granting women the right to vote. Asked when the female suffrage bill would be debated, Deputy Premier and Minister of State for Cabinet and Parliament Affairs Mohammad Sharar told reporters: "I think in March, God willing" according to Reuters.

Last May US-allied Kuwait proposed the legislation allowing women to vote and run in parliamentary elections after a previous attempt in 1999 was shot down by Islamist and tribal lawmakers in Kuwait's all-male parliament. Recently, Social Affairs and Labour Minister Faisal al-Haji said the government was committed to allowing women to vote and run for political office.

The Umma party, a new Islamist grouping with influence among hardliners, also said this week women should be allowed to vote. Several Islamist lawmakers said last year said they would back a

measure that allows women to vote but not run in elections.



Democracy

in its truest form allows its citizens to participate in all levels, from voting to taking office. We're hoping Kuwait will take steps in that direction and make history for the good of its people.

**Dates to Remember
March 7th - 11th**

**The 4th Annual
"Stop Violence Against
Women Week"**

**March 8th, 2005
International Women's Day**

**Celebrate How Far We've Come,
What We're Accomplishing Today,
and Where We're Headed Tomorrow**

For more information, please contact:
Andrea Tantaros at 202-226-9000



**All Women's Radio Station
Popular in Cambodia**

Radio Station FM 102 in Cambodia is a station by and for women. It educates on topics including HIV/AIDS, violence against women, Khmer history, trafficking in persons and poverty. The station broadcasts 7 days a week, 15 hours per day. Approximately 63 percent of Cambodians listen to FM 102, and it is one of the top two independent radio stations in the country. Broadcasts reach 11 of Cambodia's 20 provinces and 4 municipalities. The Asia Foundation funds the station.